

MARINE ADVISOR: Can the Marine Corps Prepare Them Better?

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MARINE ADVISOR: Can the Marine Corps Prepare Them Better?

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## PREFACE

*The insurgents held the high ground on three sides, pinning the unit and preventing withdrawal. The platoon sergeant realized it was time to fight and lead his men. He ran through a hailstorm of incoming enemy rocket propelled grenades and machinegun fire and boldly directed Mac's machine gun. The enemies' fire intensified, so he guided the grenadier and systematically helped destroy the remaining enemy positions. His actions bolstered the confidence of the unit, but he was struck down. He saved the lives of over forty soldiers, the actions of a hero. Yet, he was not awarded for gallantry nor was he recorded in the annals of history. He was only remembered and revered by his Marine advisors, SSgt Cooper and SSgt McMillan, as the bravest man they ever knew. As an Afghani soldier, Abdullah displayed leadership qualities equal to that of history's finest warriors.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> This is a personal experience of the author who was an embedded trainer and advisor for the Afghanistan National Army from 01 September 2004 to 07 March 2005.

Since 9/11, the Marine Corps' commitment to fighting terrorism has extended beyond conventional warfare. In the spring of 2002, Marines deployed as advisors to the Afghanistan National Army (ANA). The Marines brought relief to U.S. Special Forces who were converting Northern Alliance militia forces to regular army units as part of the Foreign Internal Defense (FID) effort<sup>2</sup> through which the U.S. sought to establish a stable Afghani government. In the summer of 2004, the advisory mission expanded beyond Afghanistan to Iraq to train and advise Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). The Marine Corps' advisory role has increased along with the importance of the advisory mission. The mission is an economy of force- a small advisory force with modest resources that make a tremendous impact. Yet, the Marine Corps has not maximized the potential of the advisory teams because they have not established a comprehensive training curriculum that screens and educates the Marine advisors. The Marine Corps must identify the associated mission essential tasks (METs) and appropriately screen Marines for required skill sets before assignment in order to establish a comprehensive training curriculum.

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<sup>2</sup> Foreign Internal Defense (FID): Participation by civilian or military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free their society from subversion, lawlessness and insurgency. [FM 20-3, *Foreign Internal Defense: Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Special Forces*.]

## Background

The advisory mission for the Marine Corps is not new, but rather an old mission revisited. In 1919 in Haiti, Lieutenant General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller's first combat experience was as a Marine NCO assigned to the *Gendarmerie* (Haitian constabulary) force as a gendarmerie lieutenant. He was charged with leading and developing the constabulary force in order to protect U.S. interests by conducting counter-insurgency operations. Later, as commander for the Guardia in Nicaragua from 1928-1930, Chesty Puller earned a reputation as a small unit tactician.<sup>3</sup> In 1954, Lieutenant Colonel Victor J. Croizat, USMC, became the first Marine advisor to Vietnam, and in 1955, he was the senior U.S. advisor to the Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC).<sup>4</sup> During the 1972 Easter Offensive, Colonel John Walker Ripley, a Co-Van<sup>5</sup> advisor to the Third Battalion, VNMC, distinguished himself and his Vietnamese comrades by preventing the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) from executing a brutal and unimpeded attack at the bridge of Dong Ha.<sup>6</sup> In fact, over the past decade, the Marine Corps has continually deployed Marines

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<sup>3</sup>Hoffman, Jon T. Colonel, USMCR (ret), Chesty: The Story of Lieutenant General Lewis B. Puller, USMC. (New York: Random House, 2001) Chapters 1-3.

<sup>4</sup> Miller, John Grider, The Co-Vans: US Marine Advisors in Vietnam, (Annapolis, Md. : Naval Institute Press, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Co-Van is Vietnamese meaning trusted friend. The Marines who advised the Vietnamese Marine Corps earned their respect. "They were," noted Vietnamese Marine Commandant, Lieutenant General Le Nguyen Khang, "our friends...the US Marines do not make any distinction between the U.S. Marine Corps and the Vietnamese Marines." [Smith, Charles R., U.S. Marines in Vietnam - High Mobility and Standdown 1969: Chapter 18- The Advisory Effort and Other Activities," U.S. History (1990)]

<sup>6</sup> Miller, John Grider, The Bridge at Dong Ha, (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Md: 1989).

to South America and Western Europe to advise and train foreign militaries.

The establishment of legitimate foreign military forces is important to promoting stable foreign governments. Military advisors in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) have been vital to the United States' national security and to the eventual transition from U.S. to Afghani and Iraqi forces. Since May of 2002, the Marine Corps has provided approximately nine Marine detachments (MarDet), consisting of fourteen to seventeen-man advisor teams to train and operate with the Afghanistan National Army. Several teams consisting of eight to ten Marines each have also been assigned to advise ISF.<sup>7</sup> These figures do not include the dozens of Marine advisors assigned to border training teams, Iraqi National Police, or who were temporarily assigned at the tactical level.

#### **IDENTITY OF MISSION ESSENTIAL TASKS FOR THE ADVISORS**

In Vietnam, Co-Vans had to be experienced in communications, logistics, casualty evacuations, and the employment of fires. Brigadier General Thomas V. Draude, an advisor in 1967, recalled that he "did not need to provide tactical advice but, most assuredly needed to link the

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<sup>7</sup> Co-van Re-union, Lieutenant General Jan Huly, USMC, Unclassified Brief. Nov 2005. *Nearly 500 Marines have advised or trained since the onset of OEF/OIF.*

Vietnamese operations with U.S. support."<sup>8</sup> While the VNMC was an experienced fighting force, they still relied heavily on their advisors to tie their operations with U.S. air support, artillery, logistics, and casualty evacuation.

Few of the Marine advisors deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq recognized the complexities of their mission. As a rule, a team of advisors has to be proficient in planning, coordinating, and executing training and combat operations. However, for the Marine detachments (MarDet), the mission essential tasks spanned the spectrum of conflict. The Marine advisors in Afghanistan conducted security patrols, border control points, raids, ambushes, cordons and searches, and medical and civil action programs (MEDCAPS) alongside the ANA. For the ISF, Marines fought side by side with Iraqis in places like Fallujah, Ramadi, and Baghdad. Today, Marine advisors accompany their counterparts on all but the most basic missions, depending on the level of experience of the host-nation (HN) forces. As an Iraqi advisor in Fallajuh, Captains Brian Mulvihill and Michael Del Palazzo (USMC) had to be competent in the fundamentals of the offense, which included establishing a support by fire, submitting a fire support plan, and coordinating or communicating with adjacent coalition units.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Draude, Thomas V., BGen, USMC(ret), Personal Interview, 03 Nov 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Mulvihill, Brian, Captain USMC and Del Palazzo, Michael, Personal Interview. 09 Nov 2005.

Consequently, Marines (individually/collectively) must be proficient in basic and advanced infantry skills: first aid (combat lifesaver), patrolling, cordon and search, convoy, radio communications (including satellite), crew-served weapons employment, threat (foreign) weapons operation and employment, offensive/defensive operations, orders preparation, and command operation center (COC) functions. Marines must be able to teach and instruct individual and collective training standards, as required of Staff Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCO) and company grade officers. However, proficiency in a specific skill set does not necessarily equate to proficiency as an advisor; a modern-day Marine advisor must be able to teach and advise a fledgling HN force. In addition, mission essential tasks (METs) should include tactics, techniques, and procedures for advising a foreign military as well as cultural preparation, including a basic understanding of the region-specific language.

#### **SCREENING: THE RIGHT MARINE FOR THE JOB**

General Draude explains:

*Good Marines are not necessarily good advisors-- they [advisors] must be selfless because their success is based solely on the performance and ability of the unit they are advising. Egocentricity has no place; the advisor must put others before self.*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Draude, Thomas V., BGen, USMC (ret), Personal Interview. 03 Nov 2005



Commands must screen all Marines being considered for assignment to an advisor team based on skills and personality traits. *The Special Forces Advisor Reference Book* provides a list of requisite skills, which include professional competency, interpersonal skills, instruction, observation, and leadership<sup>11</sup>:

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

An advisor needs to have a strong background in infantry skills and confidence in infantry tactics, techniques, and procedures. An advisor may have less combat experience than his HN counter-part or may need to advise a soldier who is senior to him by several pay-grades. In the ANA, for instance, the senior battalions have seasoned veterans who were either mujahideen<sup>12</sup> fighters during the Soviet invasion or were trained as part of the communist forces. For example, Captain Jalalladin, an ANA company commander, had experienced many battles as a young mujahideen fighter against the Soviet Union when they invaded his country; and later he fought as a militia commander for the Northern Alliance as part of the U.S. invasion in 2001.<sup>13</sup> Regardless of Afghan soldiers' combat experience, they are part of an unsophisticated military force that requires technical and

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<sup>11</sup> Special Forces Advisor Reference Book

<sup>12</sup> Mujahideen during the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in the early 1980s were referred to as "freedom fighters" and often referenced favorable as defending the principles of independence and freedom. (Arabic: مجاهدين, also transliterated as *mujahidin*, *mujabedeen*, *mujabedin*, *mujahidin*, *mujabeddin*, etc.) is a plural form of *mujahid* (مجاهد), which literally means "struggler", someone who engages in jihad, or "struggle", but is often translated as "holy warrior". [Wikipedia, *The Free Encyclopedia*; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahideen#Afghan\\_Mujahideen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahideen#Afghan_Mujahideen)]

<sup>13</sup> Captain Jallaladin, ANA, Interviews with the Author, Sept 04 to Mar 05.

tactical guidance in order to operate as a professional unit. However, each HN situation presents its own unique set of technical challenges. OEF and OIF advisors needed expertise in the employment and operation in both U.S. and Soviet-style/foreign weapons, communications, operational planning, training management, and leadership. The multitude of expertise was exemplified in Vietnam; Marines often had to prove themselves in combat before being widely accepted as a Co-Van. By displaying professional competence, Marine advisors earned the trust and confidence of the HN unit; which, ultimately, translated to confidence in the unit's soldiers to conduct increasingly complicated missions.

#### INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

An advisor is an unofficial diplomat (at the tactical level), and it is essential that he relate to the HN soldiers professionally, personally, and culturally. Because U.S. Marines represent a warrior ethos that is widely known and accepted, HN soldiers are eager to foster professional relationships with the Marine advisors. Moreover, HN soldiers in Afghanistan were motivated to meet professional standards because they did not want to disappoint their advisors. The Afghani soldiers worked very hard even if their performance did not always equate to U.S. military standards.

Indeed, building intercultural understanding is a critical by-product. Due to the social and cultural divisions between Americans and foreign soldiers, it is vital to bridge cultural gaps. The Marine advisors should always treat the soldiers with respect and dignity, even during the most challenging or trying moments; respect and dignity do not preclude the need for firmness or discipline. Exercising patience and maintaining composure are essential. The HN soldiers may have a different work ethic and often fall short of Marine standards because of cultural differences, not ability. If an advisor loses his temper or composure, a bad situation will get worse. In order to breach the cultural divide, Captain Patrick Faye, an ANA advisor in 2004, related that he "drank thousands of gallons of tea and ate entirely too much goat" in the process of establishing rapport with the Afghan soldiers. Faye further stated, "There were many times when I would be checking [sic] the lines and the soldiers would want to sit and have tea. Even if I didn't understand a word they were speaking, I always obliged."<sup>14</sup> He continually checked the soldiers and watched out for their welfare. His concern for "his men" did not go unnoticed, and the mutual respect between he and his soldiers proved to be an asset when dealing with the civilian population as well. The Marine advisor supported the ANA commander on most

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<sup>14</sup> Faye, Patrick, Captain USMC, Interview with the Author, 15 Oct 2005

missions and often found himself in the middle of Shura (informal)<sup>15</sup> or Jirga (formal)<sup>16</sup> meetings with village elders or local government officials. The mutual support of the advisor and his ANA counter-part provided confidence for the local population and added to the legitimacy of the HN military.

### INSTRUCTION

"Every [noncommissioned officer], staff NCO and [commissioned] officer knows that to lead [he] must be able to instruct,"<sup>17</sup> said Major Andrew Millburn, a coordinator for the Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC)<sup>18</sup> in Quantico. However, an advisor must be armed with multiple methods of instruction and should have a wealth of instructional experience in his field.

The Socratic method of instruction<sup>19</sup> is preferred if the situation allows enough time to develop the advisee. An advisor remains in the shadows and provides limited guidance to the HN commander in order to drive him to make the proper decision. This serves the purpose of promoting the HN commander's confidence without detracting from his leadership and command

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<sup>15</sup> Shura is an informal meeting between parties to discuss current, past, or future issues.

<sup>16</sup> Jirga is a more formal mechanism for resolution and decision-making in terms of policy.

<sup>17</sup> Chenelly, Joseph R; Marine Foreign Advisors ; The Leatherneck: 08-01-2004 .

<sup>18</sup> SCETC is an organization at Marine Corps Base Quantico who is primarily responsible for the training and coordination of Marine Advisors deploying overseas.

<sup>19</sup> Socratic method of instruction: Simply put, Socratic instruction entails directed questioning and limited lecturing without declaring the answer or solution outright.

presence. In 1966 and 1967, Major General John S. Grinalds, a Co-Van veteran, quickly understood that he was not in command of the Vietnamese forces and had no authority to order or task his Vietnamese Marines. However, he learned the power of negotiation, through influence and persuasion, that promoted his ideas without undermining the Vietnamese commander; sometimes he would have to compromise, and other times his recommendations were accepted without delay.<sup>20</sup>

Instruction goes well beyond tactical and technical skills. As an advisor, it is imperative to develop the leadership skills of the HN forces as well. Marines must continue this practice in their advisory role albeit with sensitivity to cultural differences about leadership. Because of their lack of experience, the Afghans or Iraqis may require specific directions and guidance. For example, Staff Sergeant Tim Cooper, an ANA advisor in 2004-2005 stated "if you asked them (ANA) what they want to do, you would never get the answer you were looking for, but if you told them what had to be done and asked how they would like to accomplish the instruction, you would get far better results."<sup>21</sup>

### LEADERSHIP

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<sup>20</sup> John S. Grinalds, Major General, USMC (ret), Personal Interview, 18 Nov 2005.

<sup>21</sup> Tim Cooper, Staff Sergeant, USMC, Personal Interview, 27 Feb 2005.

The Marine advisor should be more than a liaison between other coalition units; he should be an example of solid leadership throughout his assignment. The advisor is in the spotlight much like an officer or SNCO; the HN soldiers will respond more to what the advisor does than what he says. However, in most situations, leadership is often very subtle. Marine advisors must possess a moral compass for both the small Marine team they are operating with and for their Host Nation counterpart. Due to the language barriers, leadership for the advisor is often less verbal and more visual, so setting the example and maintaining integrity is imperative. For instance, making the extra effort to check the lines in the middle of the night provides a powerful leadership example for the HN leaders and soldiers alike. The role of the leader is relative to interpersonal relationships and culture. In 1969, Vietnamese Marine Commandant, Lieutenant General Le Nguyen noted:

*The U.S. Marine advisor is the only one to share the food with the Vietnamese Marines in the field. They don't carry food for themselves; they don't carry the water for themselves. They shared the rice; they shared what we had in the field, together with my Marines. They do not make any distinction between the U.S. Marine Corps and the Vietnamese Marines.*<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Smith, Charles R.; U.S. Marines in Vietnam - High Mobility and Standdown 1969: Chapter 18 The Advisory Effort and Other Activities; U.S. History.

In addition, true leader-advisors are prepared to make tactical decisions on a regular basis because they may be the only link between other coalition forces and their HN unit. Moreover, they often have a better understanding of the tactical scenario. Therefore, they are forced to task HN commanders one moment, then change hats and advise them how to accomplish the task, the next. For example, during Operation Phantom Fury in Fallujah, Iraq, Captain Brian Mulvihill was the senior advisor for an Iraqi Battalion conducting combat operations in the city. During the operation his battalion was tasked to clear a mosque that was occupied by insurgent fighters. The Iraqis did not have the confidence to clear the mosque and were unwilling to continue the fight due to the sights and sounds of the battlefield. Mulvihill was forced to lead from the front and to take command of the unit as a leader should. His unit ultimately accomplished the mission; and his actions bolstered the confidence of the Iraqi troops he was advising and leading.

U.S. Marines endured the same hardships as the VNMC Marines they were advising; they never asked the Vietnamese to do anything they were not prepared to do themselves. It is equally important that the advisor understands the capabilities and limitations of his force relative to the mission, ensures that his forces are not being employed inappropriately, and provides sound tactical leadership advice.

### OBSERVATION

Marine advisors conducting combat missions must be able to maintain situational awareness as it relates to the HN soldiers, the mission, and the joint and combined tactical operation. HN soldiers, speaking in their own language, understand the nuances of the culture and often produce more significant intelligence/information than the U.S. forces. However, advisors must be prepared to vet and disseminate collected information by asking the proper questions and by conducting thorough debriefs with their counter-parts. This may require the advisor to monitor an information/network tracking system or significant events log. For instance, during a raid in the winter of 2004, the ANA soldiers had difficulty recovering anti-aircraft missiles. Marine advisors had to interject or the mission was going to fail. Marines consolidated all pertinent information from each subordinate ANA soldier and were able to facilitate the mission success. Tactical information generally has immediate consequences, so Marine advisors must have the wherewithal to capitalize on the situation. The link for determining what information is relevant to the overall tactical picture is often the Marine advisor.

### OVERALL



When Colonel J. W. Dorsey, head of the 55 American Marine advisors in Vietnam during the Easter Offensive in 1972, was asked what skills make a good Marine Advisor?, he simply replied, "The same thing that makes a good Marine: willingness to serve, and if necessary, endure hardships."<sup>23</sup> However, the role of the current Marine advisor is more fluid. The majority of Marine advisors are providing guidance, leadership, and support for infantry type tactics, weapons employment, and civil and security operations. Conversely, some infantry-centric Marines have been challenged as advisors because they have been tasked to widen their scope of responsibility: to manage thousands of dollars of operating funds, to execute pay call for hundreds of soldiers, to work with local contractors for food and supplies, and to ensure facilities maintenance. Consequently, potential Marine advisors must be screened not only for professional competence, interpersonal aptitude, observation, and leadership, but also for maturity, common sense, and problem-solving skills.<sup>24</sup>

## **COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR AN ADVISOR**

### **CURRENT TRAINING**

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<sup>23</sup> James A Davidson. *Leatherneck (pre-1998)*, The Advisors, Quantico: Mar 1973.Vol.56, Iss. 3; pg. 18, 6 pgs.

<sup>24</sup> Special Force Advisor Reference Book

Currently, SCETC hosts a month of training (up from two weeks) prior to the advisors deploying. The current training venue consists of individual skills for shooting, moving, and communicating and incorporates first aid, force protection, anti-terrorism, convoy operations, language, and culture. On occasion, the class will obtain a historical or operational perspective from a former advisor or guest lecturer. However, little opportunity exists to benefit from the first-hand experiences of former advisors because of the hasty redeployment of the advisor teams back to their parent units. Also, SCETC has no command authority over other supporting institutions and cannot task instructors to volunteer in support of SCETC training, thus, creating other shortfalls in the curriculum.

The training package has not been formalized because of a lack of resident, assigned, or dedicated subject matter experts. In fact, training standards are inconsistent and consume the scarce pre-deployment time the MarDets have to prepare. Moreover, most of the instruction is at the introductory level with no time for sustainment or remediation. Quantico offers few available training ranges because of the competition from the resident schools on base. Couple this training resource with a lack of subject matter experts and a small SCETC staff and each advisory training evolution is a challenge. In true

Marine fashion, however, SCETC and the advisor teams have done a tremendous job with few resources available.

#### PROPOSED TRAINING

The point, however, is that the training and preparation for such a unique job as combat advising needs to be more comprehensive. Potential advisors need to complete a supervised and structured program that encompasses three levels of training in addition to supplemental formal schools. Core skills for the advisor should consist of Level I and Level II training; Advanced Advisory Skills should consist of Level III and supplemental formal school training. Level I (core) should focus on enhancing and sustaining the technical skills required of Marine staff-non commissioned officers (SNCO) and company grade officers. Level II (core advisory skills) should develop specific instructional, mentoring, tactical, and operational skills. Level III (advanced advisory skills) should concentrate on region-specific cultural and language skills as well as professional military education, leadership, logistics, and training management. Supplemental training should also include limited attendance at the U.S. John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, focusing primarily on FID.

**LEVEL I (CORE SKILLS):** Level I training would focus primarily on the following individual skills and would be considered as core requirements before deployment:

- ☐ Doctrinal terms and graphics
- ☐ Land navigation
- ☐ GPS
- ☐ Communications and reporting
- ☐ Blue Force Tracker
- ☐ Basic leadership
- ☐ Troop leading steps
- ☐ TDGs
- ☐ Weapons employment and operations
  - ☐ Assembly and disassembly
  - ☐ Function
  - ☐ Employment
  - ☐ M16/M203/M240G/M2/Mk19
- ☐ HMMWV licensing (all)
- ☐ Driving course (all)
- ☐ Threat weapons employment and operations
  - ☐ Assembly and disassembly
  - ☐ Function
  - ☐ Employment
- ☐ Combat Lifesaver (course) and certification
- ☐ Basic call for fire
- ☐ Basic close air support 9-line
- ☐ Basic MEDEVAC/CASEVAC 9-line
- ☐ Professional reading program on advisor specific missions

**LEVEL II (CORE ADVISORY SKILLS):** Level II training should focus on collective skills as team core requirements:

- ☐ Squad, Platoon, and Company tactics
  - ☐ Offense
  - ☐ Defense
  - ☐ Patrolling
  - ☐ Convoy
  - ☐ Urban Warfare
- ☐ Employment of fires
- ☐ Logistics
  - ☐ Pay
  - ☐ Contracting
  - ☐ Managing operational funds
- ☐ Bn Level operations (as required)
- ☐ Orders and planning
- ☐ Intelligence collections
  - ☐ Tactical interrogations
  - ☐ Intelligence vetting
  - ☐ Information management
  - ☐ Human intelligence techniques and procedures

- Establishing a firm base
  - Operating a Company CP
- Bn Command Operation Center (as required)

**LEVEL III (ADVANCED ADVISORY SKILLS):** Level III training should be nested with the other levels of training for to ensure the training is sustained and remediated training for Levels I and II should be continuous throughout the training.

- Foreign Internal Defense
  - Overview
  - Mission specific training
- Region specific language training
- Cultural Training
  - Situational awareness
  - Reading the people (emotions, actions, tone)
  - Case studies on cultural mishaps
- Speaking through an interpreter
- Leadership
  - Integrity
  - Setting the example
  - Troop leading steps
  - Role of the advisor
  - Development of subordinate leaders
- Instructional skills
  - Train the trainer skills
  - Methods of instruction
- Preparation of classes
- Techniques
- Tactical Decision Games (TDGs)
- Sand Table Exercise (STEX)
- How to conduct rehearsals
- Speaking through an interpreter
- Counter-insurgency (COIN) operations
- Task organization
- Professional Military advisory panels from advisory veterans.
- Training management (for the HN unit)
  - METS
  - Training, conditions and standards
- Civil Affairs
  - Organization
  - Current operations
  - Impact on FID

#### RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTAL TRAINING

The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School implements training for FID and has produced publications, such as the *US Army Special Forces Command, Special Forces Advisor's Reference Book* and *Foreign Internal Defense Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*. All, or a portion, of the advisor MarDet should be required to attend formalized instruction (advisory mission) by U.S. Special Forces. The formal instruction may be accomplished by attending a portion of the school or by requesting a mobile training team (MTT). Formal instructions from subject matter experts will broaden the Marine advisor's perspective and complement the advisor cadre for the near future. The training should also include role playing, advisory panels, counter-insurgency operations, and instructional methodology. The value of a formal education cannot be understated as the Marine Corps embraces the advisory mission.

#### CONCLUSION

Marine advisors will continue to make a substantial contribution to the development of the Afghani and Iraqi militaries, which will further contribute to enhancing the stability of the Afghanistan and Iraq governments. At a recent

conference, Co-Van advisors,<sup>25</sup> readily admitted that the Marine Corps advisory mission in Vietnam took several years to develop. When LtCol Croizat became the first Marine advisor to the VNMC, the units were in their infancy<sup>26</sup> much like the ANA and ISF are today. The Marines spent thirteen years developing their advisory tactics, techniques, and procedures. Therefore, expectations for a comprehensive training program as outlined in this work is not likely to occur immediately. However, the advisory mission is essential to current operations and will eventually bolster the future transition from U.S. led military operations to the respective HN forces.

Though Marines have had exceptional results as advisors for the ANA and ISF, the Marine Corps needs to recognize the complexities of the mission. To mitigate the lack of time and resources to train an advisor core, only the most qualified Marines should be assigned to the mission. The advisory mission will soon become the main effort of U.S. operations in both theaters. Marines will continue to be subject to a plethora of unconventional tasks in an environment in which they are expected to display leadership, initiative, and expertise; Marine advisors will undeniably continue to adapt to the fluid nature of their job. However, in the short-term the Marine

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<sup>25</sup> Co-van Luncheon, November 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Miller, John Grider, "The Co-Vans: US Marine Advisors in Vietnam"

Corps should allocate more time and resources to teach advanced advisory skills to Marines who are better suited for the advisory role. Then, as the advisor core develops, more sufficient time and resources need to be employed to promote a comprehensive training program for all prospective Marines. Screening and training of Marine advisors will enhance immediate results and increase the success of the ANA and ISF.



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